

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1) A computer-implemented method for providing online participation in a live auction, the method comprising:
transmitting over a computer communications network a description of a piece of property to be auctioned and a real time video image of a scene depicting a live auction of the property;
receiving a bid for the property via the computer communications network;
presenting the bid to an auctioneer; and
transmitting a notification of a winning bid.
- 2) The method of claim 1 additionally comprising transmitting a video image of the property.
- 3) The method of claim 1 additionally comprising calculating a highest bid received via the computer communications network and presenting the highest bid to an auctioneer involved in auctioning the property.
- 4) The method of claim 3 wherein the presentation of the highest bid to the auctioneer is accomplished with an electronic display.
- 5) The method of claim 3 wherein the presentation of the highest bid to the auctioneer is accomplished via a surrogate bidder.
- 6) The method of claim 1 additionally comprising capturing real time video images of multiple scenes depicting the live auction; and
making the multiple real time images available via the computer communications network.
- 7) The method of claim 1 additionally comprising the step of verifying the financial credibility of a bidder submitting a bid.
- 8) The method of claim 1 additionally comprising:
tracking multiple auctions with corresponding images and bids;
processing a bid is received for a particular property; and
transmitting the bid to a corresponding auction house server.

- 9) A computer system for providing online participation in a live auction, the system comprising:
- a computer server accessible via a computer communications network, wherein the server comprises a memory and a processor;
 - a multimedia device capable of inputting scenes from the live auction into the server; and
 - executable software residing in the server memory wherein the software is operative with the processor to:
 - cause a scene input by the multimedia device to be transmitted over the communications network;
 - receive a bid via the communications network; and
 - transmit a notification relating a winning bid via the communications network.
- 10) The computer system of claim 9 wherein the software is executable on demand via the network access device.
- 11) The computer system of claim 9 wherein the network access device comprises a computer.
- 12) The computer system of claim 9 wherein the computer communication network conforms to the transmission control protocol/internet protocol.
- 13) The computer system of claim 9 wherein the computer communication network comprises an intranet.
- 14) The computer system of claim 9 additionally comprising a WEB interface for accessing the executable software stored on the server storage medium.
- 15) A computer system for managing online participation in multiple live auctions, the system comprising:
- an auction host computer server accessible via a computer communications network, wherein the auction host server comprises a memory and a processor;
 - an auction house computer server for communicating with the auction host computer server via the communications network;
 - a multimedia device capable of inputting a scene from a live auction into the auction house computer server; and

executable software residing in the auction host computer server memory, wherein the software is operative with the processor to:

cause a scene input by the multimedia device to be transmitted over the communications network;

receive a bid for an auctioned property via the communications network; and
transmit the bid to the auction house server.

- 16) The computer system of claim 15 wherein the multimedia device is a video camera.
- 17) The computer system of claim 15 wherein the software is additionally operative with the processor to transmit a notification of a winning bid.
- 18) The computer system of claim 15 wherein the software is additionally operative with the auction host computer server to calculate a highest bid received for an auctioned property and transmit only a currently highest bid.
- 19) The computer system of claim 15 additionally comprising a display screen for displaying bids received for a particular property to a bidding crowd involved in the auction of that property.
- 20) Computer executable program code residing on a computer-readable medium, the program code comprising instructions for causing the computer to:
transmit a description of a piece of property to be auctioned and a real time video image of a scene depicting a live auction of the property over a computer communications network;
receive a bid for the property via the computer communications network; and
transmit a notification of a winning bid via the computer communications network.
- 21) The computer executable program of claim 20 wherein the program code additionally causes the computer to:
track multiple auctions with corresponding images and bids;
calculate a highest bid received for a particular property; and
transmit the highest bid to a corresponding auction house server.
- 22) A user interface for participating in a live auction, the interface comprising:

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an electronic display connected to a network access device and multiple display areas defined on the display, wherein various scenes depicting a live auction are displayed in the various areas.

- 23) A computer data signal embodied in a digital data stream, wherein the computer data signal is generated by a method comprising the steps of:
 transmitting over a computer communications network a description of a piece of property to be auctioned and a real time video image of a scene depicting a live auction of the property;
 receiving a bid for the property via the computer communications network; and
 transmitting a notification of a winning bid via the computer communications network.
- 23) The computer data signal of claim 23 wherein the data signal is generated by a method additionally comprising the steps of:
 tracking multiple auctions with corresponding images and bids;
 calculating a highest bid received for a particular property; and
 transmitting the highest bid to a corresponding auction house server.
- 24) A computer data signal as in claim 23 wherein the signal generated adheres to the transmission control protocol/internet protocol.

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